

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COLORADO MUSIC FESTIVAL TO PRESENT COLORADO PREMIERE OF *ENEMY SLAYER: A NAVAJO ORATORIO* ON JULY 24-25, 2008

Navajo epic features Phoenix Symphony chorus, digital images by photographer Deborah O'Grady and other supporting cultural events

February 20, 2008, BOULDER, COLORADO—Mark Grey's cutting-edge classical work, *Enemy Slayer: A Navajo Oratorio*, will be presented by the Colorado Music Festival (CMF) at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, July 24 and Saturday, July 25 at Chautauqua Auditorium in Boulder.

The oratorio, conducted by CMF's music director Michael Christie, is an adaptation of the traditional Navajo creation story about the monster slayer and his twin, featuring a libretto written by Navajo poet Dr. Laura Tohe, an associate professor at Arizona State University. The concert features the Phoenix Symphony Chorus, baritone Daniel Belcher and landscape images from California photographer Deborah O'Grady.

"This piece resonates with cultural significance. I am so grateful to the Navajo Nation, whose leaders were our guides, and whose trust we were given to share their soul-enriching heritage in this setting. I have learned a great deal about their lives and spirituality, and I'm excited to share the experience with Colorado Music Festival audiences this summer," said Christie.

Christie, who is also the music director at the Brooklyn Philharmonic and The Phoenix Symphony, specially commissioned Grey to write the piece in celebration of The Phoenix Symphony's 60th anniversary season. Its premiere on February 9, 2008, was declared "a triumph" in *Opera Today*. Grey's music has been performed in Sydney, London, and Paris, and he collaborated on a work with composer John Adams that earned the 2004 Pulitzer Prize in music and won three Grammy® Awards.

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The Colorado premiere will encompass pre-concert events around Boulder, giving a framework for a deeper understanding of Navajo culture. The CMF will present a panel discussion with Grey, Tohe and O'Grady, and will also co-present the Navajo film *5th World* with the Boulder Public Library. The film, a glimpse into the world of the modern Navajo, was premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2005.

Grey and Tohe have adopted the creation myth into modern times by keeping the monster slayer a more universally themed hero. The story chronicles a single protagonist (known as Seeker) who returns home from war to find that his support base has failed him. The chorus acts as an orchestral voice as Seeker attempts to expel his inner turmoil.

Tickets (ranging from \$12-\$45) are available online at www.coloradomusicfest.org beginning April 15. On May 12, tickets go on sale by phone (303) 440-7666 or at Chautauqua's Box Office, 900 Baseline Road, Boulder (Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-4 p.m., and 90 minutes before each concert). For more information, please call (303) 449-1397 or visit www.coloradomusicfest.org.

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Founded in 1976, the Colorado Music Festival (CMF) educates, entertains and challenges audiences of all ages by presenting classical music performed by extraordinary professional musicians from around the world at the historic Chautauqua Auditorium in Boulder. Emerging talent from Europe, Asia, South America and the U.S. join CMF musicians in performances that inspire and engage concertgoers of all ages. Under the skilled baton of Music Director Michael Christie, the CMF thrills audiences of nearly 20,000 each season with programming that embraces the most beloved classical music repertoire, while integrating world music and the works of exciting 20th century composers. All artist photos and biographies are available upon request.